(c) if so, whether no pre-shipment tests of the wheat were conducted; and

(d) if so, the action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) A quantity of 16.75 lakh MT has so far been contracted for import from Australia (13.25 lakh MT); Canada (2.5 lakh MT) and Argentina (1 lakh MT).

(b) The shipment of wheat from Canada would begin only from the month of March, 1997 onwards and, as such, the question of import consignments from Canada failing the test as per provisions of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act does not arise.

(c) and (d) As per contract terms with the foreign suppliers, the wheat to be shipped has to undergo pre-shipment quality inspection by the Government agencies in Canada and Australia, and by internationally reputed surveyors in the case of Argentina.

Export of Wheat to Afghanistan and Maldives

925. SHRI O.P. KOHLI:
SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have ordered export of wheat to Afghanistan and Maldives;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry of Food have given their concurrence to this export;

(c) whether Government have imported 1.25 million tonnes of wheat from Canada in January, 1997;

(d) the reasons why these exports were ordered, when the country is importing wheat at double the price prevailing in the country; and

(e) the reasons why export of wheat to Nepal was not allowed?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) After considering different aspects the Government has allowed exports of 30,000 MT of wheat to Afghanistan and 2,500 MT of wheat flour to Maldives.

(c) Government has decided to import upto 2 million tonnes of wheat during 1996-97. A quantity of 16.25 lakh tonnes has already been contracted for import, as on 14.2.97. The quantity of wheat contracted for import from Canada is 2.50 lakh MTs.

(d) The export of 30,000 MTs of wheat to Afghanistan was allowed for humanitarian purpose on the request of the International Red Cross. The export of 2,500 MTs of wheat flour to Maldives was allowed in view of the small quantity involved as a special case. The average landed cost of imported wheat at Indian ports is Rs. 6227 per tonne and thus not double of the price prevailing in the country.

(e) A request from Government of Nepal for making 25,000 MTs of wheat available at PDS price was received. Government has not taken a decision on this request so far.

Normative cost of Sugar Factories

926. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether the normative cost of sugar factories have increased after 1993; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) The Government have not prescribed any normative cost of sugar factories though the financial institutions while assessing the projects have been going by a certain standard taking into account the financing pattern and the prospect of return on capital. The financial institutions are generally concerned with the debt-equity ratio and the financial viability of the project. Since the State Governments contribute a large part of equity of the cooperatives and also have to guarantee the loans, the question of availability of total finance for a particular unit